(Continued from page 3)

man. Anda this the sole survivor of a family that had once been prominent in our town. He himself had been a wild youth, and his reputation had not improved with added years. He had inherited a small property from his fa-ther and was supposed to have squan-dered it. The homestead had been sold in foreclosure proceedings within a year, and little had been seen of Ai-

len in Stockton since then. I knew, however, that he had once been very attentive to Annie Davenport, but had been supplanted in her affections, if, indeed, he ever had a share in them, by a much better man, to whom she was now said by the gossips to be engaged. This was Stuart Farnsworth, son of our postmaster and himself a new fledged lawyer not without clients.

"On the night of the robbery," said the detective, "Allen was seen and positively recognized within fifty yards of the postoffice just after the safe was blown, and be was running away. That's how sure we are of him. The man who saw him had sense enough to keep dark about it except to the post-office authorities. He didn't even tell the police, for which we're much

It was a fact that Allen's name had not been whispered in connection with

"Now, here's a curious circumstance," continued Paxter. "The other robber was seen, too, but not recognized. He may have been disguised or be may be a stranger. At any rate we have his description, and we know that he carried a large black hand bag. That bag doubtless contained \$8,000 and more of Uncle Sam's money. He had sense enough not to run, and Billy Stern, the letter carrier, who was the man that saw him, had no idea that there was anything wrong with the fellow until after he heard that Allen had been seen running in the other direction empty handed. Then the meaning of the man with the big bag flashed upon Stern's mind, and he told me."

"Does the description fit anybody hereabouts?" asked Graham.

"Except for a beard, which might have been false, of course," said Baxter, "it would fit Stuart Farusworth, the postmaster's son, fairly well. And there's a point: Young Farnsworth might have known of the unusual sum of money in the postoffice safe. But he seems to have a fair alibi. He was calling that evening on a young lady named Annie Davenport." And the detective tapped the envelope with his

"It lies in my mind that the robbery was past 12," said Graham, "and the young man would not be staying at Miss Davenport's so late."

"We learn that he left about 11," responded Baxter, "but the thieves were at work in the postoffice by 10 at the latest. It was better than a two hours' job on that safe. And now, Mr. Graham," he continued, "will you help me read this letter? It is in cipher, and we can't make anything of it. We bery, and we think that we are and Allen?" justified in trying to get at the bottom of this puzzle. The young lady may be entirely innocent, of course. It's probable that she knows nothing of Allen's connection with the robbery or that he is suspected. There's doubtless some trick by which she is made to hand on Allen until he came to a looking glass hoisting purposes. For description and these letters to the right party."

"I'd say the same to her if I was you," said Graham. "Then you'll be in the way of learning the insides of all

Baxter balked at this suggestion, but we succeeded in persuading him, and he set out for the house where Miss Davenport lived with her widowed mother. I gave him a note of introduction to the young lady and some rather severe admonitions as to his besuspected her of some (perhaps unconscious) complicity in this affair. He met." was gone about two hours and returned both pleased and puzzled. Our afteracon edition had gone to press by that time, and Graham and I gave Baxter our undivided attention.

"This is a queer business," said he. from Allen. He told her some sort of a faked up story about being bothered by his debts and the noble resolve that be there." he had made to pay them all. It was necessary, he wrote, that he should communicate secretly with a friend in this town. Would Miss Davenport receive the letters and simply hold them until the friend should come and claim them? She need not answer; he would take it for granted that she would do this small service for one whom the had once been gracious enough to count among her friends. Since then she has received five letters and has held them unopened on the theory that they were not for her. The friend has not appeared. I made her understand mighty clearly that this was a part of the postoffice robbery, and naturally she didn't like the iden. Here are the letters and her written permission for Mr. Graham to read them if he can."

"Give me the one that your gillie found on the street," said Graham, And Baxter laid it before him. It was a brief typewritten note consisting of a single string of jumbled letters and figures, as follows:

212fqpvlebsf2vq3pdnh4e2 eqxglxfu2mxxxlrvjfu2qwt lujntzykn nätrph.

"You didn't show anything like that in your article," said Baxter, grinning. 'I was writing for grown folk," rejoined Graham. "This is child's play.

it a here smirt of the appraiset. The figures divide off the words and also show the extent of the shift, which fa different for each word. How simple! 3 I'- is the third letter after i; 2 f q p r'-f is the second letter after d. q is the second after o. The whole reads this way: 'I don't dare to make a move

yet. Keep quiet. Our time will come." "That doesn't give us much light," said Baxter, "but we have the other letters, and there's no doubt they were intended for Allen's pal. If the same cipher is used we've got"-

He paused as if stricken with paraly sis. One of Miss Davenport's letters was open in his hand. The contents were blank paper!

It was the same with all of them; not

a scrap of writing: no semblance of any communication whatever.

"Well, this knocks my eye out!" said Baxter. And then, with sudden epergy: "These cuvelopes have been open-ed. I see the whole game. Stuart Farnsworth is the man. These letters were not kept under lock and key; they were scarcely out of plain sight-in a drawer of a writing desk in the Daven ports' sitting room. Farnsworth could get at them without the girl's knowl-

Now, this looked reasonable enough except that a partnership in burgiary between two bitter rivals in love would be somewhat of a novelty, especially with the young woman an unconscious assistant in the nefarious schemes. My credulity was hardly equal to the demand upon it, and when I thought of what I knew about young Farnsworth's character I rebelled utterly.

"There is one point," Graham was saying. "Allen wrote this letter and lost it. Of course he would write another. Has it been received?"

"Not yet," said Baxter. Graham glanced at the clock,

"There's one more delivery today," he said, "It'll be due in a few minutes at Miss Davenport's house. Suppose we go up there."

Baxter accepted the suggestion, and we set out at once, reaching the house precisely in the nick of time. Billy Stera was in the very act of delivering a letter to Miss Davenport at the gate.

Baxter, out of breath with walking. merely extended his hand for the letter, and Miss Davenport gave it to him. The detective tore open the envelope and drew forth a sheet of blank paper "This is too much for me," said he. "I'll be hauged if I understand"-

He was interrupted by a sudden and surprising occurrence. Without the slightest warping Graham sprang upon Stern, the carrier, and the two men came heavily to the ground. Graham was much the stronger. He seized Stern's right wrist and wrenched his hand open. A crumpled paper was disclosed. Baxter stooped and seized it and I saw as he held it up that it bore a letter written in Allen's cipher.

Graham rose, pulled Stern up after him; then he faced Baxter. "Why, man," he cried, "how could ye

doubt who was at the bottom of this business? Did ye really believe that these letters were opened after Miss Davenport received them?"

"Do you mean that this fellow Stern has opened them," demanded Baxter, have reason to assume that Allen has "that they were intended for his eyes, sent several to Miss Davenport since that the whole plot was between Stern

"Beyond a doubt," answered Graham. "Stern's description of the second robber was an obvious lie intended to throw dust in your eyes and cast suspicion upon an innocent man-young in the office. He'd have a far better Oregon, chance than the postmaster's son to know of the large sum in the safe. Did

ye not think of that?" Baxter slowly shook his head.

"I guess you're right," he said. "I Chief Quartermaster's Office, Vancou

to receive the letters," said Graham.

pale and trembling postman by the Vancouver Barracks, Wash arm with a grip that made him wince.

"You'd just opened this last letter, eh?" said he. "And you had the in- BIDS WILL BE RECEIVED AT THE tlosure in your pocket? Of course, And when you saw Mr. Baxter open to crumple the slip in your hand and Eureka Cannery at Eagle Cliff. Plans toss it over the fence, but I nabbed you and specifications can be seen at the In time. Am I right?"

was too dry. His face was a picture of Right is reserved to reject any or all

"Well, I guess he's the man, sure tion.

snough," said Baxter. The rest was easy. Before the evening was over the two thieves were in custody and their plunder unearthed from the hiding place where Stern had bestowed it.

Stupid Fellow! Miss Snort-Mr. Slokoche tella me you always call your father "Pop." Miss Long-Isn't be too simple for when Mr. Slokoche is cailing on me, but be can't take a bint at all.-Catholic Standard and Times,

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remember trying to find Stern on the ver Barracks, Wash., January 25, 1906. evening of the fourth day after the Sealed proposals, in triplicate, will be robbery, and on that same evening Al-len got away from my watchers for a couple of hours. But I never thought a. m., February 24, 1806, and then pubhavior, for I could see that he vaguely that there was any connection between liely opened, for the construction, inthe two occurrences. They must have cluding plumbing and electric wiring, of quarters for two (2) N. C. Officers, at "And on the next day Miss Daven Fort Stevens, Ore, Full information will port got the note from Allen asking her be furnished on application to this "It was a clever trick. Allen knew office. Plans may also he seen at the that he was watched. He dared not office of the Depot Quartermaster. mall letters to Stern or even to a bogus Portland, Oregon, and at Fo t Stevens. "Till be hanged if I understand it. But name, for he knew you would trace Ore. The U. S. reserves the right to here's the story; A few days after the them-in short, they had to be delivdestroyed or held in the postoffice you'd part thereof. Envelopes containing prohave known that the other thief must posals should be indersed "Proposals for Building at Fort Stevens" and ad-He turned suddenly and seized the dressed to the Chief Quartermaster,

> office of the Columbia River Packers' Association for the construction of Association office. Bids will be opened Stern tried to answer, but his throat at 10 a. m., Saturday, Feb uary 10th. bids. Columbia River Packers Associa-

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